

### REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 14 and 17 are presented for consideration, with claim 14 being independent.

Initially, Applicants note with appreciation that claims 14 and 17 are allowed. As will be appreciated, claims 2, 3, 5 and 7 have been amended to depend from claim 14, and thus are also submitted to be allowable.

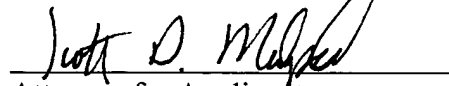
Claims 1-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Takahashi '573. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, claims 1, 4, 6 and 8-13 have been canceled, and claims 2, 3, 5 and 7 have been amended to depend from an allowed claim. Accordingly, this rejection is deemed to be moot and should be withdrawn.

The amendments to the claims were not presented earlier as it was believed that the previously presented claims would be found allowable. This Amendment cancels claims without adding any additional claims. Moreover, the Examiner's familiarity with the subject matter of the present application will an appreciation of the significance of the amendments herein without undue expenditure of time and effort. Finally, the Amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration or search; rather, the claims have been amended in order to place the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is believed that entry of the Amendment is appropriate.

Applicants also request favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance of this application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott D. Malpede", is written over a horizontal line.

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